

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
SEPTEMBER 5, 2012**

Town of Bedford
Bedford Town Hall
Selectmen's Meeting Room

Mr. Moonan introduced himself and read the emergency evacuation notice.

PRESENT: William Moonan, Chair; Karen Kalil-Brown, Clerk; Carol Carlson; Alan Long; Kevin Latady; Lorrie Dunham

ABSENT: None

PRESENTATION: Ms. Carlson read the notice of the hearing.

PETITION #003-13 – Pamela Brown, Esq., for the Blake Block, 68-84 Great Road, for sidewalk color, sidewalk streetscape, wall lanterns, railing, and signage.

Ms. Kalil-Brown and Mr. Long recused themselves from this hearing.

Railing

Ms. Brown greeted the Board and stated that there were a few final “cleanup” items regarding the Blake Block at 68-84 Great Road. She referenced the letter she had written to the Historic District Commission (HDC), signed and dated August 16, 2012 (see attachment), and noted that the first item that needed approval was a guard rail at the rear sidewalk.

Ms. Brown said that an error was made when the sidewalk was poured, and part of the existing sidewalk is 19 inches above the driveway. She said that, under Code, a railing must now be built to prevent anyone from taking a step off the 19 inch riser. She said they were proposing a very modest pike rail, painted black and made of stainless steel, as shown in the cover letter attachment. Mr. Latady said he was extremely disappointed that this happened, and he felt that it was an inexcusable mistake.

The Commission members talked with Ms. Brown about the height of the railings, and whether the railing height would be dictated under American Disability Act (ADA) requirements.

There was extensive discussion about the dimensions of the railing, the sidewalk, and the driveway. The Board conversed with the applicant about the aesthetics of the rear of the building.

Mr. Latady said that the proposed rail looks very industrial, and he felt that it was out of place on the building. Ms. Brown said they chose this rail so that it would not block the view of the building and the area would remain open. There was discussion about other options for railing materials and colors.

Mr. Moonan said it was clear that there were too many issues that needed to be addressed before the Board could make a ruling. He suggested that the applicants get more information on the railing and come back at the October meeting with final details.

Lantern Fixtures

Ms. Brown explained that the next item that needed approval involved wall lantern fixtures. She noted that the specification sheet for the lantern was included in the cover letter package, and the elevation sheet showed the location of the lights.

Ms. Carlson said the lanterns were very attractive, and asked what material they were made out of. Ms. Brown said they were made out of cast aluminum. Ms. Carlson asked how bright the lights are. Mr. Moonan noted that the wattage of each light was shown on the specification sheet.

MOTION:

Ms. Carlson moved to approve the lighting for the rear of the Blake Block, at 68-84 Great Road, as shown on Exhibit A. Lights to be Salisbury Cast Aluminum, models 9040 and 9039, placement as shown on Exhibit B-1.

Ms. Dunham seconded the motion.

Voting in favor: Moonan, Carlson, Latady, and Dunham

Voting against: None

Abstained: None

The motion carried unanimously, 4-0-0.

Sidewalk Color

Ms. Brown said that there had been some confusion in the last month with the contractors involving the sidewalk color, because one page of the original construction drawings noted a different color. She said this was clearly a drafting error, and no one she has spoken to has any record or recollection of the sidewalk being anything other than gray. She stated that she was requesting the Board's confirmation that the sidewalk color will be all gray.

MOTION:

Ms. Carlson moved to approve standard gray for all sidewalks at the front and rear of the Blake Block, 68-84 Great Road.

Mr. Latady seconded the motion.

Voting in favor: Moonan, Carlson, Latady, and Dunham

Voting against: None

Abstained: None

The motion carried unanimously, 4-0-0.

Grass Strip on Sidewalk

Ms. Brown stated that the front of the building has a similar issue as the back, in that the height of the sidewalk is higher than the grade of the street and therefore there will be a slope from the building to the road; however, it has been determined that this would exceed the allowable accessible grade. She said that the solution they have decided upon is to add a five-foot grass strip along the center, which would result in two grades of sidewalk. She stated that the Planning Board liked this idea, and everyone she has talked to has liked the idea as well, except for Richard Warrington, the head of the Department of Public Works (DPW), who wanted to have the area be all concrete.

There was discussion about the merits of a grass strip as opposed to all concrete for the sidewalk, and how accessible the area would be to people parking along the street.

Mr. Moonan talked with Ms. Brown about the plowing of the area and whether the slope could be traversed in the winter with snow and ice.

Ms. Brown said she wasn't sure whether this sidewalk area even fell under the HDC's jurisdiction, but she wanted the Commission to be aware of it and hopefully bless it anyway.

Ms. Carlson asked whether any other buildings in the Historic District have a grass strip running along the middle of the sidewalk. Ms. Brown replied that the First Church of Christ and Salon Alfonse both had strips of grass in the sidewalk.

After further discussion, The Commission members concluded that they thought a grass strip was better than all concrete, although there was concern that snow removal could become an issue.

Transformer

Mr. Moonan said that a large transformer has been placed at the Blake Block site that was not, to his knowledge, ever discussed or approved by the HDC. He talked with Ms. Brown about the possibility of moving the transformer, and she commented that it could not be moved without great expense. There was discussion about ways to shield the transformer from view, either with plantings and landscaping or with fencing. Ms. Brown said that, when they return to the October meeting to discuss the guard rail, they will have a plan for shielding the transformer.

Signage

Christian Klein, of Approach Architects, handed out a packet (see attachment) showing the proposed signage for Wicked Good Frozen Yogurt, one of the tenant spaces for the Blake Block.

Mr. Moonan noted that the Commission usually never rules on a sign application without first having a sign-off from Christopher Laskey, the Code Enforcement Director, as they first need to know that the signs meet the dimensional requirements under the Sign By-Law. There was discussion about whether the Board would rule on the signs tonight without a proper sign application for Wicked Good Frozen Yogurt, as opposed to a ruling under the broader umbrella of the Blake Block. It was concluded that the Commission would look at the application tonight and make comments but would not formally rule on it until it was applied for and advertised as a hearing for this specific business.

Mr. Klein went through the sign packet with the Board members and talked about the four proposed signs: an awning sign, a projecting sign, and window lettering at the front of the tenant space; and a sign at the back of the building.

There was conversation about the lighting fixtures used to illuminate the signage.

Mr. Latady said he thought the packet was very well put-together and, if this were a formal vote, he would vote in favor of this signage, as he thought it was very attractive. The other Board members agreed. Mr. Moonan suggested that the applicants come back with a formal application for this particular business at the October meeting.

Mr. Klein thanked the HDC members for their time and stated he would be back at the next meeting in October.

BUSINESS MEETING:

First Parish Church – 75 Great Road

Joel Parks, a resident of 13 Ledgewood Drive, and Reverend John Gibbons, both of the First Parish Church, introduced themselves. Mr. Parks explained that the Church members have been working on a scheme for bicycle racks to be located at the entrances to the building. Rev. Gibbons noted that bicycle racks were approved by the HDC about ten years ago and were never built, and now the Church wants to tweak the design and make them more visually interesting. He said they were here tonight to get some informal guidance as to the design, material, and color so the Church members will know whether they are on the right track.

Mr. Moonan asked whether these bicycle racks would primarily serve the Elm Street entrance. Rev. Gibbons replied that they hope to have racks that will eventually serve all three entrances, but for the present they were focusing on the racks for the Elm Street entrance. He added that each set would probably consist of four to six racks.

There was extensive discussion about the colors and styles of the bicycle racks shown in the handout.

Mr. Long said that he felt some of the designs in the handout packet were far too modern, and the notion of seeing “modern art” bicycle racks at the First Parish Church seemed extremely incongruous. He said that the stainless steel, in particular, felt several centuries out of place. He added that his color preference would be black, and there was not any black bicycle rack shown in the packet for which he would not vote.

There was more conversation about the most appropriate material for the racks.

Mr. Moonan said that his only other suggestion would be to consider the landscaping around the racks, and whether the Church wants the racks to stand alone or have a path leading to them. He noted that if there were to be a walkway or pavers, the Commission would want to know of what materials it would be made.

43 Great Road

Mr. Long mentioned that, two months ago, the HDC had approved bluestone pavers for the walkway at his house at 43 Great Road. He said that he and his wife have decided that they would rather have brick than bluestone, and they wondered whether they would have to appear before the Commission again to request that change. He added that they were planning to repave the driveway, and there was a small section of dirt between the driveway and the apron of the garage that they would like to have paved. Mr. Moonan said those items seemed minimal to him and he didn’t feel that they required an HDC ruling. The other Board members agreed.

Mr. Moonan called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION:

Ms. Carlson moved to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Latady seconded the motion.

Voting in favor: Moonan, Kalil-Brown, Carlson, Long, Latady, and Dunham

Voting against: None

Abstained: None

The motion carried unanimously, 6-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 PM.


William Moonan, Chairman 1/9/13
Date

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott Gould
HDC Assistant

Historic District Commission
Minutes of Meeting 9-5-12